

Docket 00-00797

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Date: 9/15/00 12:28PM
Subject: Sprint proposed rate changes

Chairman Kyle and Directors Greer and Malone:

I have seen the public notice of Sprint's proposed rate increases. I am a Tennessee resident and a Sprint customer. These increases look preposterously large to me. They all appear to range in the 30% to 150% range. What Tennessee consumers--both residential and commercial--pay for phone services today is already ridiculous. Last September you approved Sprint charging \$1.40 for each intrastate long-distance assistance request. That's ridiculous. Last May the charge for call waiting went up 33% in one month, from \$3 to \$4. That's a ridiculous increase.

The charges on the average telephone bill are already beyond ridiculous. Multiple federal, state and local taxes. Access fees, connection charges, line charges, taxes, taxes, and taxes on taxes. An experienced CPA couldn't understand the average telephone bill. On several occasions I have called Sprint for an explanation for some new--or newly increased--charge and the people at Sprint cannot even explain it. But everything gets approved by you so they can charge it.

I object to any increases in charges by Sprint or any other carrier. I urge you to begin looking out for the consumer, not the industry. Increases of 30-150% when we are already paying ridiculous amounts for arcane services in morally and socially insupportable. When an increase for a particular service can be justified--and any requested increase out to be justified with facts and figures that are looked at, compared, discussed and challenged rather than accepting industry BS--it should be a modest increase of 3-5%--like normal increases in the incomes of working people who pay these bills.

Frankly, I think your commission is industry biased and insensitive to consumers. Why don't you get on side of the bill paying consumer and require 1) simple understandable billing; 2) minimal charges for what are essential services; 3) modest increases only when justified by clear and convincing evidence; and 4) better customer service from carriers. Calling Sprint or any other phone company for even a simple reason is a 20-30 minute project during which you can expect to listen to multiple sets of recorded instructions 90% of which don't pertain to you, be required to punch in you phone number only to have to repeat it later when you get a real person on line, be put on hold interminably while listening to the same recording over and over and over and over and over..., be disconnected, dead ended, or told the computers are down and to call back in three hours! That's a very typical experience of calling a phone company.

Vote NO on these proposed increases by Sprint. Vote YES for reductions in costs, simple billing, and better customer service.

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cc: Gov. Don Sundquist